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Girl accuses two-time 'teacher of year' of sex assault

By Gayle Simone
 Staff Writer

ANDOVER -- A former state "bilingual teacher of the year" and famed Methuen High baseball player is accused of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old female student at Greater Lawrence Technical High School.

Yesterday Haverhill police arrested David A. Bueno, 31, a teacher in the area for eight years, for allegedly inviting the female student into his classroom and pressing his aroused genitals against her from behind.

His lawyer, Arthur Broadhurst, said the student fabricated the story and has a history of making similar allegations at other schools.

Facing a charge of indecent assault and battery on a child over 14, Bueno was released on \$5,000 bail and ordered to stay away from the school and any children under the age of 16, with the exception being his 4-year-old daughter.

Greater Lawrence Superintendent Frank Vacirca said Bueno, a bilingual teacher, has been suspended pending the outcome of the case.

"The safety of the students is paramount," he said.

Bueno was named "Bilingual Educator of the Year for Massachusetts" in 1997, when he was teaching seventh- and eighth-graders at Comprehensive Grammar School in Methuen. In 1998, he was named Methuen's "Teacher of the Year." He began teaching at Greater Lawrence Technical High School five years ago.

"I've always thought that all educators should focus more on teaching children and not just subjects," he told the Eagle-

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Tribune in 1997, after winning the state teacher award. "If (students) don't have the desire, it's my job to provide it for them."

Bueno grew up in Methuen and graduated from Methuen High in 1989 and from Salem State College in 1994. He now lives at 29 S. Central St. in Haverhill.

While at Methuen High, Bueno was considered one of the best baseball players in the state and was named Merrimack Valley Conference's most valuable baseball player his senior year. The legally-deaf shortstop was highly touted for a .647 on-base percentage and led Methuen to a 17-3 record that year.

Assistant District Attorney Murat Erkan said yesterday that the alleged assault should be considered more serious because it happened at the school and the girl wasn't one of Bueno's students.

Erkan requested bail be set at \$5,000, but Broadhurst argued that bail should be lower, based on Bueno's history as a teacher at Methuen High School and Greater Lawrence.

Bueno is expected to appear in Lawrence District Court at 9 a.m. April 25 for pretrial.

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